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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the role of the community college in promoting academic integrity, this paper provides a review of the literature and a case study describing the development of a relevant college-wide policy. First, a general overview of the role of colleges in promoting values is presented. Next, the literature review on cheating and plagiarism in colleges defines cheating and its consequences, looks at the grey areas, discusses why students cheat, and asks how community colleges, with primarily adult student bodies, can ensure acceptable values and behaviors. Practical suggestions for preventing cheating in the classroom are also provided, following which the case study, describing the activities of the Academic Standards Committee at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC), in Springfield, Illinois, is presented. The case study reports on a survey of LLCC faculty to determine if academic dishonesty was a problem on the campus, and the debate surrounding the development of a policy statement which would encourage honesty, and provide guidelines for instructors that conform to higher education's standards. The paper concludes with recommendations proposing that: (1) the academic institution must be a role model; (2) faculty and colleges must teach students how and why not to cheat; (3) policies must empower both students and faculty; (4) policies must be adaptable to individual faculty member's and institution's needs; (5) the reasons students cheat must be examined; (6) the administration must support faculty; and (7) integrity should always be stressed over cheating. LLCC's survey instrument and academic integrity policy statement are appended. (MAB)

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Academic Integrity--A Review and Case Study

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Abstract

This article reviews the concept of academic integrity and the role community colleges should have in promoting academic integrity. Academic integrity is defined as using only one's own work as a student. Thus, the absence of any form of cheating or plagiarism is assumed.

Following a general overview of the role of the community college in promoting the formation of values, a review of cheating in the academic setting and the prevention of cheating will be presented. Following a description of one institution's experience with implementing an academic integrity policy, some implications for practice will be presented. Most importantly, policies should emphasize faculty and student empowerment, role modeling, an emphasis on correct rather than incorrect behavior, and meet the needs of a variety of students and faculty members.

The Role of the College in Promoting Values

The Carnegie Studies of 1975-76 reported that 93 percent of undergraduates believe it is essential or fairly important to formulate values during college. Eighty-two percent of faculty surveyed believed that firm moral values are an important consequence of education. From its beginning, higher education has seen itself as having a key role in developing young people's moral standards (Rudolph, 1956).

Robinson and Moulton (1985:28) stated that colleges and universities "must decide whether [they are] going to try to direct [students] values, influence them in any way, or ignore them for good or ill." This issue is especially acute in the community college due to at least two factors. First, community colleges have never viewed their role as taking the place of parents in the same way many traditional colleges have. This is probably due to the time in which most community colleges developed (the 1960s and 1970s, when more of a hands-off policy held) as well as their status as primarily commuter colleges.

In the 1950s and 1960s, restrictions on dress, required meal attendance, and curfew were common. Yet Robinson and Moulton noted that this paternalism, also called <u>in loco parentis</u>, was an imperfect monitoring system. Student law-breakers were often saved from criminal persecution by the college, with vandalism, rowdiness, drunk driving, and other forms of criminal

behavior often tolerated. Since the Dixon vs. Alabama State Board of Education case (1961), however, students now do not gain any new rights or lose any old rights when enrolling in college. Jendrek (1989) noted that it was the Dixon case that made academic dishonesty codes a necessity. According to Roberts (1986), now students must be provided with a written notice of charges, a reasonable time to prepare a defense, an opportunity to rebut the charges, the opportunity to have the charges heard by an unbiased hearing officer, and a record of the charges.

The second factor that has affected the community college as a shaper of student values is the fact that most community college students are adults. It is not uncommon to find community colleges with average student ages of 30 or greater. Few faculty view themselves as "molders of minds and values" in such an environment. In an adult education environment, faculty are more often guides or student facilitators. An academic integrity policy must then focus on a continuum of behaviors to promote ethical behavior and dissuade cheating.

Cheating and Plagiarism in Colleges

There is a vast literature, albeit fragmented, on cheating in colleges. A 1964 study by Bowers showed that anywhere from 50 to 80 percent of college students cheat. The 1969-1970 Carnegie Survey showed that 5.4 percent of students said they had to cheat to get the grades they wanted; in a 1976 repetition of this study 9.8 percent of students made this statement. In 1972 Smith

found that 91 percent of students admitted to cheating.

The New York Times has had two interesting reports of cheating. In 1974, 42 percent of Amherst College students admitted to cheating on papers or exams; a more general study conducted ten years later estimated that over half of all students cheat. Two reports found that over 75 percent (Baird, 1980) and over 87 percent of college students admitted to cheating (Sierles, Hendricks, and Circle, 1989). One recent dissenting report by Karlins (1988) indicated that many students may say they cheat when they really don't. Only 3 percent of a mass-lecture business section actually cheated. David and Kovach (1979) found that negative faculty expectations could actually cause students to cheat. This may indicate that we need to look more at what students do instead of what they say they do.

There are four basic questions to be answered based on the research. First, what is cheating and what are its consequences? Research has shown that students perceive cheating quite differently from their instructors (Stern and Havlicek, 1986). They do not view many behaviors as cheating. The consequences of cheating also may seem to be positive to a student - that is, I cheated, got a higher grade, and no one else suffered. Yet if the student is a future physician, what harm could come to patients from such action? In the health professions, Hilbert (1987) found a correlation between unethical classroom behaviors of nursing students and unethical clinical behaviors.

Second, where are the grey areas? For example, plagiarism is an interesting concept. The definition - appropriating another's words or ideas without acknowledgement - is easy. However, Canuteson (1983) has shown that the concept of a theft of ideas varies from field to field. Good scholars have been known to unintentionally repeat passages verbatim, forgetting the original source. Kelman and Hovland (1953) have found that much learning occurs where the learner forgets the source of such knowledge. I personally know one faculty member, full of ideas, who will not write for publication as he has a fear of plagiarism, and - "It has all been said before."

There are issues in plagiarism that are very clear, such as the selling of term papers. There are others that are very murky, and only learned through experience, for example, the difference between building on the past and plagiarizing the work of others. For example, can students acceptably use other students' term papers as a reference?

Third, why do students cheat? Different studies have analyzed various factors:

- Personality (Hetherington and Feldman, 1964).
- The "me" decade (Stern and Havlicek, 1986).
- A desire for grades (Roizen, Fulton and Trow, 1978).
- Immaturity (Haines,Diekhoff, LaBeff and Clark, 1986).
- Poor college policy (Carmack, 1984).
- Public figures serving as poor role models (Fass, 1986).

- Alienation of students (Newhouse, 1982).

Shaughnessy (1988) found that empirical research and theorizing about cheating behavior are scanty and inconclusive. Research needs to focus separately on those factors that are environmental and those that are external to the institution. This will help practitioners in developing effective classroom strategies as well as teaching students how not to cheat.

Finally, where do we stand? Having rejected the paternalism of the 1960's, how do we promote acceptable values and behavior while also condemning inappropriate behavior? Are honor codes "dead", or is Fass's (1986:34) assertion that there is "no objective basis between choosing between the two systems" of honor codes and faculty-monitored systems accurate? He declared that there is no fundamental difference between the two systems in terms of value orientation. The mission, culture, and history of an institution are instead prime in developing and enforcing academic integrity policy. Where do community colleges, with primarily adult students, stand on the issue? Some of these questions, at least from the author's standpoint, will be answered in the final section.

Preventing Cheating

Attention to environmental effects influencing cheating by students in the classroom will be helpful to the instructor wanting an ethical classroom. As in medicine, prevention of cheating behavior is often the best cure. If the instructor

has an adversion to the "police officer" image often conjured up when the enforcement of academic integrity is discussed, perhaps the prevention analogy will be less objectionable.

In 1971 Warner developed guidelines that are no less useful today. She maintained that it was the instructors responsibility to monitor cheating. Students are under stress in the educational setting, and we must realize that often otherwise "good" people act abberantly under stress. She stated that "If cheating is a function of the personality structure of the student, and the school accepts such an individual, the school has an obligation to provide an environment which will maximize the student's maturation" (Warner, 1971:131).

What is must important is what not to do, according to Warner:

- Do not overreact.
- Do not feel threatened.
- Do not get angry.
- Do not correct the student in front of the class.
- Do not immediately plan how to punish the student.
- Most importantly, do not think less of the student, or label the student as dishonest.

Houston (1986) has amassed in a ten year period a substantial amount of data regarding the environmental attributes conducive to cheating, and has found that:

- There is a positive correlation between acquaintanceship with the person seated next to the subject and cheating.
- There is a relationship (but not statistically significant) between using multiple test forms and the reduction of cheating. Bresnock (1989) did find a statistically significant relationship between alternating response patterns and the elimination of cheating.
- Those subjects reporting poor study conditions are more likely to cheat.
- There is no correlation between success and cheating, cheaters do not perform better on exams.
- Those with an external locus of control (perception of the world as a difficult place) did not cheat more.
- Cheating does increase with an increased class size.

Two texts to guide classroom instructors in setting the proper classroom tone are Eble's (1988) The Craft of Teaching and Kibler's (1988) Academic Integrity and Student Development. Eble's text is especially helpful in providing a holistic approach, discussing cheating in relation to the other "Grubby Stuff" and "Dirty Work" of teaching - texts, assignments, test, grades, and motivation.

Case Study - Implementation of a Policy

The Academic Standards Committee of Lincoln Land Community College surveyed its faculty to determine if academic dishonesty

is a problem at the college. 58 of the 88 respondents (67%) indicated that they have experienced academic dishonesty in the past year. 11 of the 58 (19%) indicated that it had happened 7 or more times in the past year. Most often, cheating involved looking at another student's test.

Few instructors (17) indicated that each instructor should have his or her own policy, with most preferring a uniform policy or recommended guidelines. 48 respondents would have preferred guidelines over policy. A vast majority believed students should have the right to appeal, and a large percentage believed that the committee should concern itself with the topic (73 of 81 respondents to this question; 90%). The results of this survey are listed in Table I. It is interesting to compare the results

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Insert Table I about here

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of this survey with that of other studies. Jendrek's (1989) survey of 337 faculty members at a public midwestern university found that 60% of faculty had observed instances of cheating. In 1974 Wright and Kelly found that 65% of faculty at a liberal arts college had encountered cheating. Wright and Kelly also found that only 15% of faculty reported students to administration when cheating occurred. Nuss (1984) found that 39% of faculty would report students to the authorities. In this study 18% of faculty indicated that they would inform an administrator "whenever" cheating occurred.

The written comments on this survey were very interesting. Most were in favor of implementing a policy. For example, one instructor commented "To not take a public, clear-cut stand on such a basic issue is to demean LLCC ethics." Another commented, "Why would we not take a public stance for ethics - clearly published and authorized by the entire college?"

There were of course dissenting views, most of which focused on teacher autonomy and the legalization of an academic process: "An appeal process puts the instructor on the defensive when it's the student who is guilty." And regarding students, "I am sure that they would probably sue us for libel if we accused them of cheating." Hardy (1982) argued that faculty were afraid of lawsuits and either looked the other way when cheating occurred or dealt with the student on a one-by-one basis. This seems to be the case here.

Thus a policy was developed by the Academic Standards Committee to (a) Encourage honesty; (b) Give guidelines to instructors; and (c) Come into line with other colleges having similar guidelines. It gives a list of possible infractions, as well as appropriate actions. Minor actions should receive minor consequences, so a variety of punishments are possible. It was written by faculty for faculty, to allow for actions without administrative approval. This policy can be found in the Appendix.

Though the policy was approved by student representatives,

administration, and the Board, as well as coming from a faculty committee, there were still many undercurrents of minority dissent. At a faculty inservice, one session focused on the policy. The following is a list of concerns brought forth by the faculty:

- The policy signals a loss of autonomy for faculty members. The need for a policy signals a lack of trust in faculty.
- The policy is too long. Simply it should state: Do Not Cheat.
- The criteria for challenge are not spelled out enough. Faculty will not know how to defend themselves: students, how to properly accuse.
- We need to teach students what is right and what is wrong. The document does not define academic integrity.

However, others indicated that a policy would be empowering for both students and faculty. One faculty member stated those with real integrity will not mind a challenge to their integrity.

It is obvious that the lack of a policy has led to unclarity on the part of many faculty. One of the questions brought up was "Why now? What is different than before?" Many faculty were comfortable with a self-monitoring system, and are unsure what the academic environment will be without it.

Two recommendations may be of value in retrospect. First, many faculty, though certainly not the majority, feel that the policy overly empowers students, and disempowers faculty. It might have made sense, given the differences between disciplines noted earlier, to issue one general policy while allowing disciplines to modify the policy to their own needs. One faculty member noted that one division on the survey (Humanities) already had a policy in place. An occupational program, radiography, bound by specific accreditation requirements, also had a long-standing policy. The policy was constructed without input from these, and probably other, factions.

The policy does not teach or describe ethical behavior; therefore it is also not empowering to students. The policy focuses too strongly on student cheating. Certainly faculty need to know why and how students cheat; it is equally important that students be recognized as honest until proven otherwise. It might have been better, for example, to not mention academic dishonesty so early in the document (the first sentence). Instead of listing violations of academic integrity in the second paragraph, the following revision of the first two items defining violations of integrity may have been superior to the policy in the Appendix.

The following represent the practice of academic integrity by a student:

A. Only using authorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise, including placement, proficiency, and CLEP tests.

B. Only using true information and recognized citations in an academic exercise.

This could of course continue throughout the document, emphasizing correct rather than incorrect behavior.

Second, administration assumed no official role at the meeting. This was probably with good intent; one goal of the policy was to give instructors guidelines they may use without administrative direction. However, faculty are concerned that their voice may not be heard in a student-oriented environment. A strong stance by administration ("we will back you up") may have been valuable. Raffetto (1985) noted that without an involvement by administration in the process of academic integrity, the process is doomed to failure.

It will be interesting to see the effect of this fledgling policy in an established institution. Whereas most established institutions have long established policies, this institution has attempted since 1973 to implement a policy, off and on, with failure.

Implications for Practice

The practice of academic integrity must be developed as follows:

- The academic institution must present itself as a role model. Faculty must realize, for example, if they violate copyright law students might see this as a license to cheat. Canell (1989) has described the "Lake Wobegon effect," in which all 50 states have somehow scored above national norms on standardized tests. He maintained that this may be due to cheating, deceptive testing practices, or misleading reporting methods on the part of public educators. Certainly if we cheat, students will cheat.
- As well as being role models, faculty and colleges must teach students how and why <u>not</u> to cheat. Policies and standards should be part and parcel of the catalog, faculty syllabi, and handouts. Stern and Havlicek (1986) assert that faculty must confront misconduct as part of their role as eductors, and demand honorable behavior on the part of students.
- Policies must empower <u>both</u> faculty and students. Policies must be a collaborative effort of administration, faculty, and students. Bailey (1990:35) has also called for collaboration to "arrive at solutions which foster professional, academic, and ethical growth."

- Policies must be freely adaptable, within reason, for individual faculty members and institutions. Prescott (1989:287) stated that over-regulation "creates an environment stifling to scientific enterprise."
- The reasons why students cheat must be examined, and any environmental reasons for cheating must be minimized. Fass (1986:33) noted that "attention to faculty practices and to the classroom environment should be a part of every institution's strategy for eliminating academic dishonesty."
- Administration must commit themselves to faculty and promise to support them so long as they provide evidence of cheating. Fear of any type should not cripple faculty in their pursuit of integrity. Prescott (1989) has found that even institutions with long established polices are generally ineffective in policing themselves. Those faculty afraid of lawsuits should consider reviews of the literature such as Young and Boswell (1987), which indicate that courts have been deferential to the judgement of academicians, usually upholding the decisions of faculty and administrators. Roberts (1986) reported similar findings. Zelenski (1988) found that academic integrity policies have usually had the effect of keeping colleges <u>out</u> of court so long as they are well defined.

- Integrity should always be stressed over cheating.

The last point is surely the most important as it sets the theme of any policy. An information-based society cannot tolerate the theft of ideas any more than it can tolerate the theft of other assets. Students must not learn from us by example or default that such theft is acceptable. Colleges must stand firm in their promotion of academic integrity, which includes faculty and student empowerment, role modeling, an emphasis on correct rather than incorrect behavior, and policies that meet the needs of a variety of students and faculty members.

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Table I

Survey Results

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1. In the past year, have you experienced academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, collusion, etc.) in your classes?

   58 Yes 30 No

   A. If yes, how many times?

   22 1-2 20 3-6 11 7 or more

   B. If yes, in which of the following areas:

   10 Student plagiarized a minor writing assignment

   8 Student plagiarized a term paper

   14 Two students turned in identical homework

   13 Student used a "crib sheet" during an exam

   39 Student looked at another student's exam paper

   3 Student stole an exam from your office

   11 Other

2. When would you typically inform an administrator of an instance of dishonesty?

   16 Whenever it occurs

   46 When I need advice or support

   19 When I foresee an appeal by the student

   12 Never

   2 Other

table continues

Table I

Survey Results

3. With regard to consequences for dishonesty:

17 They should be determined by the individual instructor

48 There should be recommended guidelines included in the faculty handbook.

38 There should be a uniform policy.

4. Should the college develop an appeals procedure for students who are accused of dishonesty?

59 Yes 14 No

5. Do you feel that the topic of dishonesty would make a good topic for small group discussion in an inservice day?

48 Yes 20 No

6. Do you feel that the Academic Standards Committee should concern itself with academic dishonesty?

73 Yes 8 No

Appendix A

Academic Integrity Policy

Policy 4.075 Academic Integrity

Through this policy the College intends to act with consistency in dealing with issues of academic dishonesty, and furthermore to guarantee to students every opportunity for due process. While the faculty and larger college community actively foster a climate promoting high standards of honesty, it is the student's responsibility to maintain personal academic integrity at Lincoln Land Community College.

The following items represent actions which are violations of academic integrity:

A. Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise, including placement, proficiency, and CLEP tests.

B. Intentionally falsifying or inventing information (or citations in an academic exercise.

C. Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to committ any act of academic dishonesty.

D. Committing plagiarism by intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. Plagiarism includes undocumented direct quotation or paraphrased and/or unacknowledged borrowed facts or information.

E. Bribing or attempting to bribe, promising favors to or making threats against any person, with the intention of affecting a grade or the evaluation of academic performance.

F. Taking an exam for someone else.

G. Stealing, destroying, or tampering with another student's work.

H. Falsifying college records, forms, or other documents.

I. Accessing college computer systems or files when not authorized.

Penalities for Violations of Academic Integrity

Having witnessed or otherwise identified an instance of academic dishonesty, the faculty member will either impose or recommend an appropriate penalty, depending on the seriousness of the offense.

Penalities for Academic Dishonesty

The instructor may impose any one of the following penalities:

A. a written notice of warning, with a copy placed in the student's file;

B. a reduced grade on the assignment;

C. a grade of "F" (zero if graded numerically) for the assignment;

D. a reduced grade for the course;

E. a grade of "F" for the course.

If the student withdraws from a course after the dishonest behavior is observed, the instructor may change the grade to "WF" or "F" as appropriate.

The instructor may recommend consideration of suspension or dismissal through the Student Judicial Process.

Imposition of Penalities

An instructor who charges a student with one or more acts of academic dishonesty shall notify the student in writing of the specific charge. A copy of the charge(s) will be sent to the appropriate Academic Administrator and to the Dean of Admissions, Records, and Research.

The instructor shall decide which of the penalities, short of suspension or dismissal, is warranted and notify the student in writing. In cases deemed by the instructor to be sufficiently serious to possible warrant suspension or dismissal from the College, the instructor may recommend that the charge be considered through the Student Judicial Process. This recommendation shall be reviewed by the appropriate Director, Associate Dean or Dean and by the Vice President for Student Services. Then, if appropriate, it will be transmitted to the Vice President, Student Services for Action.

Students are guaranteed the right of appeal under the provisions of the Student Grievance and Appeal Procedure.